

Fort Sam Houston National Historic Landmark  
Military Post of San Antonio, Company Barracks and Band  
Building (Buildings #603-610, and 613, Infantry Post)  
San Antonio  
Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TX-3303-11

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Architectural and Engineering Survey  
National Parks Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
FORT SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

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MILITARY POST OF SAN ANTONIO, COMPANY BARRACKS AND BAND BUILDING  
(Buildings #603-610, 613, Infantry Post)

HABS No. TX-3303-11

Location: 603-610, 613 Infantry Post Road, San Antonio, Bexar County,  
Texas

Present Owner  
and Occupant: United States Army

Present Use: Offices; vacant

Significance: Buildings 603-610 and 613, constructed between 1886 and 1887, represent the Army's earliest efforts to provide adequate housing for the enlisted men assigned to the Military Post at San Antonio. The row of two-story, attached company barracks with central, three-story sallyport forms an impressive eastern boundary for the horseshoe-shaped development now known as Infantry Post. This row of barracks, designed by noted local architect, Alfred Giles, has most recently been used for miscellaneous Post offices.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1885-1887
2. Architect: Alfred Giles. The September, 1885 edition of the San Antonio Express includes an elevation of the Sallyport building signed by Alfred Giles, Architect, and W.W. Selleck, Engineer, San Antonio, Texas. Yet the accompanying article states: "the entire planning of the new barracks and quarters was designed by Colonel J.G.C. Lee and the working out of designs was done under Colonel Lee's direction by Messrs. Alfred Giles, Architect and C.H. Millington, Civil Engineer". Mary Carolyn Jutson credits Giles with the design of the Sallyport building. Its detailing is very much like that found on Staff Post residences by Giles and many other private buildings attributed to him. (See Part 2, Bibliography.)
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: U.S. Army from date of construction until the present.
4. Builder/Contractor: The contractors working on structures on Infantry Post, 1885-1887, were : W.S. Pleasants (1885), T.W. Carrico (1886), and P.F. Shields (1887). Their work on individual company barracks is not confirmed.

5. Original Plan and Construction: A three-story, buff-colored brick Sallyport with crenelated parapet is located at the center of a long barracks row. The Sallyport building has flanking two-story, four-bay wings which attach to four, thirteen-bay company barracks on each side; in total, nine attached structures forming the eastern boundary of what is now known as Infantry Post. The two-story attached barracks were also buff-colored brick with two-tier frame porches on the front and rear. Barracks windows were 4/4 with dressed limestone lintels and sills. The gable roof was covered with standing-seam tin.
6. Alterations and Additions: The center Sallyport building remains virtually untouched on the exterior, with the exception of original window shutters having been removed. Originally serving as the Band Barracks, it was converted into the prison/guard house in 1893 when a separate band structure was completed. In 1935, the Sallyport building was converted for use as a barracks. The interior floor plan of the Sallyport building remains relatively intact as well.

The upper rear porches of the barracks buildings were enclosed with wide clapboard siding in 1937. In 1942, all porches, front and rear, were enclosed with clapboard and the buildings renovated. While more than doubling the capacity for the barracks, the original floor plans remain relatively intact. Original exterior windows have been removed. The roof is covered with green composite shingles. The interior spaces are presently used for offices or remain vacant.

- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure: There are none.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: An impressive row of two-story, buff-cream brick barracks, anchored by a central, three-story, brick Sallyport building. The 1940s clapboard enclosure of the original two-tier front and rear barracks porches significantly alters the original architectural character of this structure. The center brick Sallyport, with its dressed limestone detailing, remains virtually unaltered, however. Thought to

have been designed by noted local architect Alfred Giles, the Sallyport detailing is reminiscent of Giles' designs for other public buildings of this period within the surrounding area.

2. Condition of Fabric: The condition of the fabric is generally good. Underuse has resulted in poor maintenance and deterioration. A number of small roof leaks are in need of repair.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Over-all Dimensions: A three-story brick Sallyport, it measures approximately 62' x 38'4", with two-story wood frame wings, approximately 31' x 31', and four flanking attached two-story barracks buildings, measuring approximately 122' x 31'-6", on both the north and south ends.
2. Foundations: The foundations consist of rock face limestone ashlar rising slightly above grade.
3. Wall Construction, Finish and Color: The original buff-cream brick exterior walls of the barracks building are only visible on the north and south ends. The front and rear facades are significantly altered by the 1940s frame porch enclosure on the east and west facades. The end walls are laid in common bond in a 5-1-5, stretcher-to-header, pattern above the first floor. The first story wall is laid in an all stretcher bond.

The Sallyport building is of buff-cream brick in a 5-1-5, stretcher-to-header, common bond with dressed limestone quoins, window sills, stilted segmental-arched keystone lintels on the first and second floors, round-arch window lintels on the third floor, and crenelated parapet. A segmental-arch Sallyport is highlighted by a dated keystone and surrounding voussoirs on the front and rear.

4. Structural System, Framing: Brick load-bearing walls form the structural system.
5. Porches and Stoops: The former frame two-tier front and rear porches were enclosed in the 1940s with approximately 6" wide molded clapboard siding. Each barracks has center double doors and single doors at each entrance with frame entry porches approximately 3-4 steps above grade, sheltered by simple, shingled shed roofs.

There are two-step concrete stoops at the six first-floor entry doors off the center Sallyport--three on each side.

6. Chimneys: Red brick chimney stacks with arched metal caps project slightly above the peak of the end gables at the south and north ends. Attached barracks buildings apparently share chimney flues.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doors and Doorways: The center barracks double-door entrances added with the 1940s porch enclosures are five-panel horizontal panel doors with fixed, four-light transoms above; modeled after the original entry doors (now interior doors). The end doorways are five-panel doors with no detail or transoms. The doors off the Sallyport are solid four-panel raised panel doors with flat rock face lintels above.
  - b. Windows: The original windows remaining on the north and south ends of the structure are four-over-four double-hung sash windows with rock face lintels and sills and recent aluminum frame screens. The 1940s frame enclosure windows are couple six-over-six frame double-hung sash windows.

The center Sallyport windows are stilted segmental arch four-over-four double-hung sash windows on the first and second floors, and standard arched four-over-four double-hung sash windows on the third floor. The windows originally had shutters. Each window has prominent dressed limestone lintels and sills.
8. Roof:
  - a. Shape and Covering: Each barracks has a gable roof with ridge running north-south. Individual barracks are defined by a parapet gable end projecting above the roof line. Gable roof flattens at the front and rear for inset gutters. The attached front and rear frame porch enclosures have shallow pitch shed roofs. The roofs are covered with green composite shingles--they were originally tin. The Sallyport roof is flat with heavy crenelated parapet. The covering is not visible, originally tin.

- b. Cornice, Eaves: The original corbelled cornice on the barracks remains unaltered (with the exception of painting), despite the enclosed porches--the porch roof extends out just below the cornice, with decorative plaster or metal end blocks at the gable ends.

The Sallyport parapet has a corbelled brick cornice with small arched patterns and crenelation across the top.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: The three-story Sallyport has large open rooms on the second and third floors above the first floor driveway. Winding staircases from the first to the third floor rise on either side of the open Sallyport at the front of the building. Flanking two-story wings, originally open barracks halls on the first and second floors with the front and rear porches, now have light partition walls breaking the open space into smaller office spaces. The four attached barracks on either side of the Sallyport building vary only slightly in floor plan. Each barracks has a thirteen-bay facade with a central double-door entrance leading into a stairhall. Originally, there were open barracks on each side of the center hallway; the first floors have generally been broken into smaller offices. Many of the second floors are still open rooms, however. Bathrooms have been added to the south end barracks buildings in the front.

2. Stairways: Curved open run staircases wind up to the third floor in an open well on either side of the Sallyport building. The staircase has a simple hexagonal newel post with turned balusters and molded handrail. Patterned pressed tin covers the underside of the staircase.

The barracks stairways are straight-run stairs with solid, unadorned railed enclosures along the outside walls, and plain squared posts at the bases. Stairways are located in the center hallways, running west to east.

3. Flooring: 12" square linoleum tiles comprise the flooring throughout. Some of these tiles are green, some brown.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: The original plaster wall remains, with other light-frame partition walls added to adapt rooms for office space. All woodwork is plain.

Most ceilings still retain the original pressed tin. Ceilings have been dropped in most center hallways.

5. Doorways and Doors: Original exterior double doors with transoms remain, but are now interior doorways. The original exterior windows have been removed, with spaces left open between the central rooms and porch enclosures, providing more natural light and circulation to the central portion of the building.
6. Mechanical Equipment:
  - a. Heating: Heat is provided by a gas system with prominent hot air ducts running throughout the barrack buildings.
  - b. Lighting: Lighting is provided primarily by florescent fixtures. Some chain-suspended, glass-globe, incandescent lights remain.

D. Sites:

1. General Setting and Orientation: This row of buildings at the eastern end of Infantry Post originally faced on a central parade ground, which is now developed with two-story brick housing units and a large baseball field.

This long barracks is built on uneven ground, with a gradual slope from north to south. This gives the individual attached barracks a somewhat stepped appearance.

2. Outbuildings: Service latrines and kitchen facilities were built at a later date (1906) of compatible materials in the rear of the structure.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

Barracks row elevation appearing in the San Antonio Daily Express, September 15, 1885.

B. Old Views:

Views of Fort Sam Houston, 92F-56, Audio-Visual Archives, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. (Reference Numbers 3, 9, 11, 16) Additional photos taken by George R. Adams, September, 1974.

Fort Sam Houston Military Museum, Building #123, Fort Sam Houston,  
San Antonio, Texas.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and Unpublished Sources:

Buerkle, Ruth. Infantry Post at Fort Sam Houston, Texas: Location, Description, History of Buildings Recommended for Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, July 1974. Unpublished Report.

Orchard, Elizabeth. The History of the Development of Fort Sam Houston. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1936. (Held at the San Antonio Conservation Society Library.)

Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General Consolidated Correspondence File 1794-1915, Microfilm Reel from the National Archives, Washington, D.C., held at the Fort Sam Houston Post Library, San Antonio, Texas.

2. Secondary and Published Sources:

Handy, Mary Olivia. The History of Fort Sam Houston. San Antonio: Naylor, Inc., 1951.

Jutson, Mary Carolyn Hollers. Alfred Giles: An English Architect in Texas and Mexico, San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972.

D. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated:

Correspondence and other miscellaneous files relating to Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C.

E. Supplemental Material:

1. A letter from W.H. Owen, Civil Engineer, Office of Quartermaster General, U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. (no date), written to the supervising officer of this 1885-1887 addition to the Post, commented as follows on the proposed plans of the barracks submitted to the Washington Office:



"The design for company quarters is probably as good as could be devised as to floor plan and general exterior. The battlemented central portion is somewhat obsolete and in doubtful taste, I think...I do not like brick buildings in the country and I think...These buildings should...be of stone like all the other buildings at the depot".

#### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The detailed survey of eighteen (18) architecturally representative structures, and a group of streetscapes, at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas, was undertaken in 1980 by the National Architectural and Engineering Record (NAER) after a comprehensive inventory of the Post was conducted. Funding for the project was made possible through the cooperative efforts of the Department of the Army, Fort Sam Houston, and the San Antonio Conservation Society.

This project was under the general supervision of Kenneth Anderson, Acting Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Architectural and Engineering Record. Sally Tompkins of the NAER staff was project supervisor. Project Historian was Kathryn A. Burns, San Antonio, Texas. Photographic records were provided by David Kaminsky, Roswell, New Mexico.

**FORT SAM HOUSTON,**

**MILITARY POST OF SAN ANTONIO,**

**COMPANY BARRACKS & BAND BUILDING**

(Fort Sam Houston, Infantry Post)

(Fort Sam Houston, Building Nos. 603-610 & 613)

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603-610 & 613 Infantry Post Rd.

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**ADDENDUM TO**

**FORT SAM HOUSTON NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

**MILITARY POST OF SAN ANTONIO**

**COMPANY BARRACKS AND BAND BUILDING**

(Building Nos. 603-610 & 613, Infantry Post)

San Antonio

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**HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

Washington, D.C. 20001